



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF SACRED LITERATURE.

After six months of work upon the Old Testament, the Sunday school world will with July first take up the study of the Gospel of John. Already those who must teach this most interesting gospel are looking forward with pleasure to the lessons of those six months. Perhaps few of these will realize the beauty of this wonderful picture of the inner life of Christ and his beloved disciple and many will pass lightly over all but the most apparent teachings.

This will be due to several causes which apply as well to the teaching during the past six months. Let us name a few of them.

1. Inadequate preparation for teaching the subject.
2. Lack of systematic method in presenting it.
3. Unwise direction in the preparation of the lessons.
4. Lack of responsive study on the part of the pupils.

This is a discouraging outlook and we could not afford to present it were there no remedy for all this.

Suppose we set over against these negatives their affirmatives,—

1. Adequate preparation.
2. Systematic method.
3. Inspiring helps and helpers.
4. Enthusiastic preparation by the pupils.

What is needed for the first. (1) To make a careful study of the *whole gospel of John*. (No one can adequately teach a part of this gospel without some comprehension of the whole); (2) to acquire a connected and chronological outline of the discourses of Jesus; (3) to study the peculiar words and phrases which John uses; (4) to grasp in a general way the critical questions involved; (5) to obtain an organized view of the purpose and teachings of the Gospel, taking first each section by itself and then as a part of the whole book; (6) a constant appreciation of the *practical* teachings of the Book.

The second requirement will follow as a result of the first and third.

But what of the third. We have no wish to undervalue the usual Sunday school helps. If they were used conscientiously as confirmation and condensation of the preparatory study of the teacher, they would be valuable. The difficulty is that for the ordinary teacher they do all the work. Such a teacher is by these means able to grasp what seems to him the entire lesson in a few minutes, or a brief hour, and goes to his class with this shallow preparation.

To avoid this result, lessons should be suggestive rather than complete. They should require one who is to teach the lesson to give to it daily study and careful thought. The results which he attains, should, while guided by suggestions, be independent and his own. Such a series of lessons has been prepared for the Student and has been publishing since January first. These lessons are now issued in quarterly form and can be used by Sunday schools and other organizations for Bible study.

A plan by which yet closer direction can be given to Sunday school teachers has been devised by the American Institute of Sacred Literature. Through

its corps of competent instructors, teachers may take up an individual correspondence course in which they will themselves be carefully and personally taught the lessons which they must in turn teach. Better still, a body of teachers may form a club for the same study. The close instruction given by the Institute through the leader of this club may be by him imparted to all. Each member of the club will also receive general direction, suggestion, and criticism from the Institute. Thus to the interest of systematic thorough study will be added the inspiration of class work.

Many earnest teachers have already availed themselves of this opportunity and are waiting eagerly for the opportunity to impart to their pupils the comprehension of the word which they have gained in the past few weeks. How many more will, before July, wake to their responsibility and come into the ranks of Bible students cannot be told here. We welcome each one, however, as a sign of the new and widespread interest in the study of the Book of books, in this age of Christian renewal.

*It is not for Sunday school teachers alone* that the Bible Club plan referred to above has proven helpful. It has found a home in some of the leading Universities of the country, in Colleges and Academies. Sunday schools have formed clubs in their adult classes and Sunday school teachers have converted their weekly teachers' meetings into these organizations. Pastors have organized classes among their church members. Christian Endeavor and other young people's societies have come into the work in a body. Business men have been attracted by the novel idea and banding themselves together have spent pleasant evenings in following out the club instructions. Busy mothers and housekeepers have taken this means of keeping abreast of and beyond their children in the Sunday school. Surely this work is for the world.

*Examinations.* The fourth point of which we purposely omitted to speak in connection with the work of Sunday school teachers, is one which is to them a serious question, viz., how shall we get the children to study? The careful preparation of the teacher may do much to inspire a desire for independent study on the part of the pupil, but this is not a sufficient incentive. The vague idea in the mind of the child of the *result* of such study prevents any deep interest in it. In the day school at the end of a period of study and recitation the pupil is allowed through the monthly, quarterly, or annual examination to see in appreciable form the result of his work. The Institute plan of Biblical examinations supplies this incentive to the study of the Sunday school lessons and has been in the past year productive of the best results. We hope that many teachers will at the outset persuade their pupils to study with the examination in view. We shall be glad to receive not only applicants for the examination but volunteers for the work of Special Examiner.